

City of Conneaut, Ohio

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Updated: 2014



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As approved by the Planning Commission
And City Council



The City of Conneaut is blessed with
an abundance of residents
who eagerly and continuously commit
their time, ideas, and efforts
for the common good.

We are very thankful
For their participation in the
Many meetings which contributed to
The production of this plan

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CONTENTS

I.	Introduction	Page 1
II.	Background	Page 2
III.	Goals	Page 12
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional Perspectives• Population• Housing• Economy• Environment• Existing Land Use<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recreation and Tourism• Museums• Cultural• Transportation• Utilities	
IV.	Comprehensive Plan Update	Page 15
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General Development Policies• Land Use Plan<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Land Use Plan Map</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">Residential Land Use AreasCommercial Land Use AreasIndustrial Land Use AreasOpen Space and Recreational Areas• Transportation Element<ul style="list-style-type: none">RoadsRail and Lake ShippingWalkways/Bikeways• Historic Preservation	
V.	Implementation	Page 30
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning and Regulations• Capital Improvements• Economic Development Tasks• The Action Chart 2002-2005	

Appendix – Existing Land Use Map

Chapter I – Introduction

This document sets forth the vision of the City of Conneaut for its future development. It has been approximately fourteen years since this document has been reviewed and updated. The original document was a result of nearly one year of work by the City Planning Commission, with the assistance of its consultant, Northstar Planning and Design, Inc. The creation of this plan has also benefited from the ideas and participation of many citizens, including those who served on the Citizens Advisory Committee and those who responded to public notices seeking their attendance at review meetings.

The community's vision is expressed in this Plan for land uses and needed roadways and utilities. The State Legislature has passed legislation that eliminated a number of funding sources which had a negative impact on the ability of the community to sustain its revenue stream. Therefore, emphasis and priority is still given to developments which create new business opportunities, employment opportunities, and enhancements to the local tax base. This planned growth is essential to the future of our community.

If we don't change our direction we're likely to end up where we headed.

Lao Tzu

Pre-planning studies documented the economic changes which have affected our community in recent decades. Changes in the transportation industries resulted in the loss of many jobs and a decline in population. Recent efforts on the part of the public officials, residents, and business people have begun to address those losses. This Plan sets forth strategies for continued improvement.

Objectives are not fate; they are direction. They are not commands; they are commitments. They do not determine the future; they are means to mobilize the resources and energies of the business for the making of the future.

Peter F. Drucker

It is hoped that the residents and business people will find this plan a useful guide to the future of their community and will join together in support of its realization. It is also hoped that others who consider coming to our community will see in this Plan the energy and opportunity of Conneaut.

Chapter II - Background

The first step in updating this Plan was to study current conditions of the City and its surroundings. Data was collected from various sources including field surveys. The information was analyzed to identify patterns and trends, opportunities and weaknesses relevant to planning for the future.

This chapter presents a summary of the pre and post plan data and analyses based on the original document and current Census data and observations.

Regions perspectives

Conneaut is located in Ashtabula County in the northeast corner of the State of Ohio, abutting Erie County in the State of Pennsylvania. The City of Erie is approximately 30 miles east and is the nearest sizable urban area. As a lakefront community, Conneaut has no “hinterland” to the north, thus its immediate area of influence, mostly surrounding rural areas, is half that of an inland community.

Conneaut is well-connected to the region by interstate highway (I-90), other federal and state highways (US 20, SR 84, and SR 7), by a network of local roads, railroads, and the lake port. Distance from urban areas, however, limits the availability of goods, services, and cultural amenities. Yet the Community realizes a lower cost of living.

The community’s regional situation reinforces the need for focused local efforts to build and broaden the local economy to benefit Conneaut residents and the residents of nearby communities.

Population

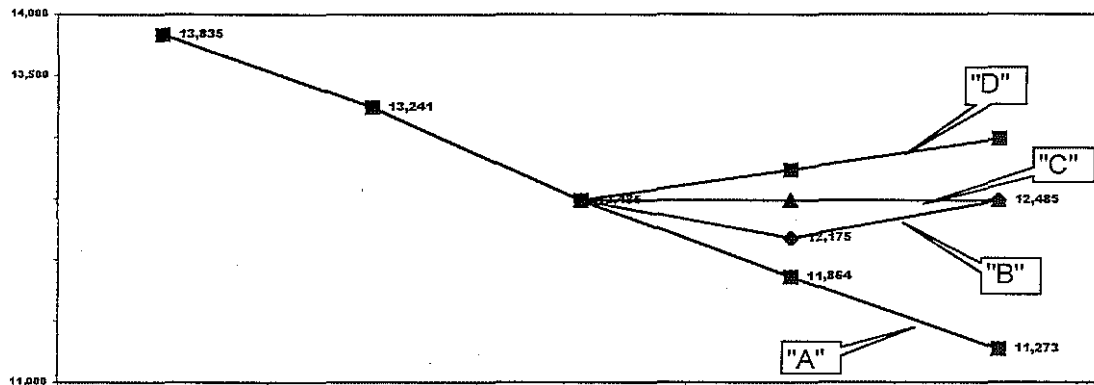
The US Census for 2010 recorded a population of 12,841, which is an increase of 356 residents over the 2000 US Census recorded population of 12,485. This is about a two percent (2%) increase over a ten year period. The reason for the increase in population is unknown at this time.

The City’s population had reflected a trend of decline since the population peaked in the 1960 Census. It is believed that this decline has been due in large part to loss of transportation industry (rail and port) jobs. The nationwide trend toward smaller households is also reflected in the local trend.

- Trend A projects continued population decline consistent with the past decades (loss of approximately 5% per decade).
- Trend B projects a reduced rate of decline followed by moderate increase (loss of 2% followed by a gain of 3%).
- Trend C illustrates a flat population trend (no gain or loss).
- Trend D illustrates a modestly increasing population (gain of approximately 2% per decade).

Population Trends Prediction in 2000

City of Conneaut



Of the four trend lines described in the original document and shown here, Trend D appears to have come to fruition from year 2000 to 2010 while the first four years of the next decade the population seems to have stabilized.

Time will tell if the trend in population will continue to grow, which would be evident in 2020 when the next census is completed.

Housing

The 2000 Census recorded 5,710 housing unit in the City, while the 2010 Census reported 5,702 housing units. A decrease of eight units. In the midst of the foreclosure crisis, approximately thirty-five (35) homes have been demolished in the city. This in itself is not detrimental to the housing stock in the city as it can raise the value of other homes due to a housing shortage. It is also probable that residents with well maintained homes will continue to keep maintaining their homes which will stabilize the values in the neighborhood.

The housing stock is diverse in age, type, and tenancy. The balance of 70% owner-occupancy and 30% rental is normal for mid-sized northeast Ohio communities.

A significant proportion of the housing is over 40 years old, with approximately 75% built prior to 1960. Over the past decade, new housing construction averages 14 units per year, with a peak of 23 new units in 2000. Between 2013 and 2014, the City has seen a slight increase in home building (6 new homes).

Economy

Historically, household income statistics have been below those for the state. Poverty levels have exceeded state levels.

In 1999, 35.4% of Conneaut workers were employed in manufacturing. It is notable that this portion is higher than Ashtabula County (29.1%) and significantly higher than for the State of Ohio (20.0%).

City of Conneaut			
Income Date	1999	2000	2010
Median Household Income	\$21,144.00	\$31,717.00	\$35,014.00
Median Family Income	\$26,313.00	\$37,955.00	\$47,621.00
Per Capita Income	\$10,276.00	\$14,703.00	\$17,087.00
Poverty Status for Individuals	19.1%	13.0%	22.3%
Note: 2000 Poverty status is based on all income levels of 12,340 with 1,605 determined to be below the poverty level. 2010 Poverty status is based on all income levels of 11,039 with 2,465 determined to be below poverty level.			

Income Levels Compared to County and State	Conneaut		Ashtabula County		Ohio	
	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010
Median Household Income	\$31,717.00	\$35,014.00	\$35,607.00	\$41,075.00	\$40,956.00	\$48,246.00
Median Family Income	\$37,955.00	\$47,621.00	\$42,449.00	\$51,116.00	\$50,037.00	\$61,163.00
Per Capita Income	\$14,703.00	\$17,087.00	\$16,814.00	\$20,135.00	\$21,003.00	\$25,857.00
Poverty Status for Individuals	1300.00%	22.30%	12.10%	18.00%	10.60%	22.90%

The unemployment rate for the City ranged from 7.2% in December of 2005 to 9.0% in December of 2013. While the State unemployment rate was 5.4% in December 2005 and 6.6% in December 2012. The national average for 2005 was 4.9% and in 2012 was 7.8%. Although it appears that the unemployment rate is increasing, it has to be noted that in 2009, the city unemployment rate was at 14.0%, the state was at 10.4%, and the national average was 9.9% therefore, the unemployment rate has been dropping.

Census data indicates that the Conneaut work force is employed close to home. In 2010, mean travel time to work decreased from 22.9 to 21.9 minutes (a decrease of approximately a minute). It should be noted that seventeen percent (17%) of the residents drive up to fourteen (14) minutes to work, while twelve percent (12%) drive an average of 34 minutes to work. In 1989, 88% of Conneaut workers worked in Ashtabula County, while in 2010 only 80% worked in the county (a 8% decrease over 1989). In 1989, 58% worked within Conneaut, while in 2010 only 43% worked in the city. This is a 15% decline in those working in the city that they live in. Due to the proximity to Pennsylvania, in 1989 7% worked outside Ohio, while in 2010 the percentage increased to 10%. This is a 3% increase over 25 years.

Environment features have a significant role in shaping this community, both in its history and as parameters for its future. Conneaut is located along the Lake Erie plain and extends south through several ancient beach ridge lines, rising gradually from the lake level of approximately 600 feet above sea level to a level of approximately 750 feet, and then more rapidly to a level of about 930 feet. This plane is cut by the deep valley of Conneaut Creek which flows from Pennsylvania into the southeast corner of the City, thence westward and exiting the City through its south central

border, re-entering the City again near its southwest corner, flowing on a diagonal to the northeast and thence north to its mouth at Lake Erie. Most of the area of the city is within the Conneaut Creek watershed.

Wooded areas appear to be most abundant in the southerly, more steeply graded areas and in the creek valleys. Concentrations of wetlands are found in the flatter northerly area, especially the northeast corner of the City.

Several important conclusions can be reached from examination of the environmental milieu of Conneaut:

- This City, located at the most northerly end of Conneaut Creek, and including its outlet at Lake Erie, has the potential to be impacted by pollution from the Creek watershed, including the extensive upstream areas which extend through many communities in two states.
- The deep Conneaut Creek ravine has shaped land use and transportation in the City and continues to create barriers and opportunities for future development.
- Lake Erie is both a physical barrier and an important resource for water, transportation, and recreation.
- Both the Conneaut Creek Watershed and the Lake Erie shoreline support recreation and open space opportunities.



Existing Land Uses

The pattern of existing land use development reflects the historic development of the City, long before the arrival of I-90 and even SR 7. The bulk of development is located in the north central area bound by Conneaut Creek and the Lake Erie shoreline. This concentration of housing and businesses is located close to the rail and lake shipping facilities which were the source of the community's original development. In lesser densities, development concentrations are also strung along US 20, including the neighborhood east of the US 20 bridge over Conneaut Creek.

Minimal development has taken place in the areas south of Conneaut Creek and US 20. A very small amount of commercial development has occurred in the I-90/SR 7 interchange. Residential development has been primarily in frontage lot splits with few new "subdivision streets".

Residential uses are scattered throughout the community at varying densities and in varying forms. The greatest concentration of housing is in the older "urban neighborhoods" extending in a corridor from downtown to the harbor area and to the west of that area. Several smaller concentrations are also located along US 20.

Much of the lakeshore frontage from the harbor recreation area west to the city limits is lined with permanent and seasonal dwellings, although this seems to be changing with older cottages being razed and new larger homes replacing them. Lower density residential uses are scattered throughout the remainder of the city.

Business uses, including retail, services, and offices, are located in five concentrations.

- Downtown. This area is the traditional, historic business core and is a key element of the image of the community. The downtown is ideally located to serve the concentration of residential areas which surrounds it. Some significant observations include the presence of an inconsistent, scattered pattern of development; scattered vacancies and underutilized spaces; a mixture of business and residential uses within the commercial zoning district; and the high concentration of churches and other public/semipublic uses.
- Harbor. This small concentration of commercial uses includes a concentration of eating and drinking places along with a mixture of other businesses. The area is likely to have potential for tourism and recreational development. The pattern of development is unorganized. A number of buildings are in fair to poor condition.
- East US 20. This older “strip commercial” area suffers from scattered vacancies. Several businesses appear to be in marginal condition. The current and potential future market area of this district is questionable.
- West US 20. This is also a scattered strip commercial area which includes a shopping center with significant vacancies. The factors of declining local population and competition from the newer Ashtabula shopping area are likely to affect this area.
- Interchange. Despite the highly visible and accessible location of this commercial area, evidence of new development is limited. The dominant development is an aging community-type shopping center with grocery, auto supply store, and check cashing businesses. Next to the shopping center on Gateway Avenue is a fast food restaurant. Across the street on Gateway Avenue is a motel and a car repair facility. A truck stop facility was developed south of I-90 on SR-7 which incorporated two fast food restaurants within the facility. A local restaurant dominates the southeast corner of SR-7.

Declining local population has impacted the market for existing commercial floor areas and commercial zoning. Obvious issues in this plan will be the “fit” between the existing market and the available commercial properties in addition to appropriate patterns and sequencing for future commercial redevelopment and/or growth in concert with potential population/market growth.

Industrial development also exhibits a scattered pattern, in large part due to its historic relationship with rail patterns. The implications of the scattered industrial pattern include:

- A variety of industrial sites are available, including several with rail access.
- Industrial traffic is scattered throughout the community, dispersing its impacts broadly.
- The City completed the East Side Industrial Park.

- Vehicular access from the I-90 interchange to all of the industrial areas is indirect.
- The scattered pattern complicates the City's task of focusing industrial development resources.
- There are abundant locations where land use conflicts between industrial use and residential uses. Although the industrial uses may not have a negative effect on the residential uses.

Recreation and Tourism

Public recreation areas are primarily concentrated in the harbor area. Malek Park/Arboretum is located on the west side of Parrish Road. CLYO ball fields are located on Center Road next to Conneaut Creek. Township Park is located on Route 531/Lake Road and offers swimming, play equipment, tennis courts, and basketball courts etc. Additional facilities are located on school sites. The residents also enjoy neighborhood parks such as:



- Dean Avenue Park – Children's play equipment and basketball and tennis courts.
- Liberty Street Park – Children's play equipment and tennis courts.
- Marina Park – open space with monuments.
- Hayward Park – Children's play equipment.

Tourism

Tourism is a major economic engine for the economy of Conneaut. The small businesses rely on the revenue stream from May to October to be able to get through the winter season. Therefore, winter activities or festivals should be looked at to help businesses get through these lean months. Memorial Day starts the season of festivals.

Festivals and Events

- Sock Hop
- Soap Box Derby
- Fourth of July Festival
- D-Day Celebration
- Christmas Parade
- MS Bike Run
- Rib Burn Off
- Dock Fest

Museums

- Railroad Museum on Depot Street.

- Historical Society Museum off Mill Street across from the CSX railroad tracks behind the Railroad Museum.
- Octagon House on Liberty Street.
- D-Day Museum on Harbor Street is being developed



Cultural

- Arts Center – Holds concerts on Sunday during the summer months, as well as other events such as amateur theater and dance recitals.

In addition, there is a movement to create more public areas for recreational fishing such as Old Mill (which was completed in 2014), Welton Road on the east side of SR 7, and Farnham Park.

Open space is abundant throughout the community outside of the most heavily developed core area. The most interesting and attractive open spaces are seen along the lake front, in the Conneaut Creek Valley, Turkey Creek that runs through US Steel property, and in the varied topography in the southern third of the City.

Transportation

By virtue of its location on I-90, Conneaut is well-connected to the regional and national highway systems. I-90 and several state highways provide convenient, although lengthy, travel between Conneaut and other major highways and urban areas.

Conneaut's local road system is characterized by a high degree of interconnection and very complete grids throughout most parts of the City. This is the case in most of the older, denser urban neighborhoods as well as in the lower density rural areas. This pattern benefits local traffic by providing alternative routes between origins and destinations and dispersing traffic impacts. It benefits emergency vehicles by affording multiple, alternative approach routes to emergencies. It is also beneficial for efficient routing of service vehicles for waste collection, deliveries, and school buses. Conneaut's road system has not been inflicted with disjointed patterns of cul-de-sacs which is found in so many other communities.

The elements of local road systems are typically described by assigning roads to categories which reflect their functions. The categories vary for each community, but usually range from very high speed, high volume roads such as highways which carry interstate or regional traffic to low speed, low volume roads which provide access to residential properties.

For the purposes of this Plan, existing roads have been placed in the following categories:

- **Interstate Highway.** The sole road in this category is I-90. While the majority of the traffic traveling this highway has origins and destinations outside of Conneaut, the interchange at I-90 and SR 7 provided an important local link to this highway for employment, shipping, and other travel.
- **Major Arterial.** These roads carry heavy local traffic, typically with connections to abutting communities. The two roads in this category are SR 7 and US 20.
- **Minor Arterial.** These roads primarily carry significant volumes of local traffic and interconnect major parts of the community. They have intersections with several collectors. Roads in this category are Broad Street, Lake Avenue, and Parrish Road.
- **Collectors.** In a highly interconnected pattern such as Conneaut, the distinctions among collector and local roads become blurred due to the dispersion of traffic. The following appear to be the dominant collectors: Chestnut, Chamberland/Clark, Maple, and Center (from US 20 to Gateway).
- **Locals.** These roads primarily provide access to the frontages of properties and are not intended for significant through traffic. All roads not otherwise classified above are local roads.

There are several potential barriers to local traffic patterns within the City. These barriers are natural or manmade features which are difficult and/or expensive to cross with local roads. In Conneaut, these potential barriers include Lake Erie, the two segments of Conneaut Creek, the three railroads (CSX, Bessemer, Norfolk Southern), and I-90 (a restricted access highway). Obviously, railroads and I-90 have other transportation benefits and impacts on the community, as does access to Lake Erie. The impact of these potential barriers is greatly reduced by the numerous overpasses, underpasses, and at-grade crossings which have been constructed. As a result of these many crossings, the local road pattern is relatively unobstructed by these potential barriers.

Despite the many crossings, however, some barriers do remain:

- The northerly segment of Conneaut Creek is crossed by several bridges, but only two – SR 7 and US 20 – are designed to support significant heavy traffic. In 2014 the US 20 bridge is going to be replaced with the project expected to be completed by 2016. These two crossings are relatively close together and near the downtown. Future need for movement of heavy traffic across the Conneaut Creek valley (for example, from the westerly industrial area) may require a major new bridge.

- Most rail crossings are at-grade, meaning that local traffic is obstructed when the rail is in use and heavy local traffic must utilize an at-grade crossing, the crossing can become a serious local traffic obstruction.
- Rail rights-of-way and Conneaut Creek essentially isolate the northeast corner of the City from local traffic access.

There are three freight rail systems that pass through the City. They are CSX and Norfolk-Southern, and Bessemer Railroads. The Conrail line is a regional line which carries passengers and passes through Conneaut without a stop at local facilities. The Norfolk-Southern, and Bessemer rail lines operate rail yards within the City limits. Norfolk-Western provides rail siding service for some local industries. The Bessemer connects the lake port facilities to coal production areas as well as Pittsburgh Pennsylvania steel mills.

Utilities

The City operates municipal water treatment and sanitary waste systems.



Water lines have been extended into most areas of the City. The notable exceptions are the northeast corner and a portion of the southwest corner. The water treatment plant with a virtually unlimited supply of raw water from Lake Erie, has a capacity of 2.8 MGD (million gallons per day). Daily pumpage reports for 2014 indicated that demand averages approximately 1.4 MGD. The water plant clearly has capacity to provide water for significant amounts of new development.

In 2014 the City replaced the Creek Road standpipe with a new water tower with a capacity of 250,000 gallons.

Sanitary sewers have been installed in a much smaller area of the City. The pattern of sewerage areas is generally:

- The older, developed part of the City of north and west Conneaut Creek and west of Parrish Road;
- A corridor along the entire length of US 20; and
- A strip along Dorman Road extending to serve part of the I-90/SR 7 interchange area.

The wastewater treatment plant is rated at 7.0 MGD, a significant amount of storm water and groundwater infiltration periodically increase the wastewater volumes to levels which meet or exceed plant capacity. Efforts are ongoing to eliminate such extraneous water from the sanitary sewer system and to maintain plant capacity.



Another significant limitation in the existing system is the capacity of the Woodworth Road Pump Station. Sanitary waste from all sewerage areas south and east of Conneaut Creek is routed to this facility for pumping to the trunk

sewer on the west side of the Creek and thence to the treatment plant. In the near future, additional development in the service area of this pump will increase flows and necessitate improvements.

Much of the area north of I-90 and south of Conneaut Creek is not served by sanitary sewers. Recent sewer extensions have been constructed on Dorman Road, Gateway, Avenue, and south of I-90 into the southeast quadrant and are expected to stimulate development. It is expected that the limitations in the downstream facilities will necessitate construction of a new trunk sewer system to serve the areas west of SR 7. This system would probably flow north to Conneaut Creek and along the creek to the treatment plant.

Areas outside of the sanitary service areas have the potential to develop with on-site waste disposal systems approved by either the County Health Department (residential systems) or the Ohio EPA (commercial systems). The regulations applicable to these systems significantly limit both residential density and the intensity of business development feasible in these areas. It is likely that both technological and regulatory changes will impact land use feasibility and demand in these areas.

It is obvious that areas which are served with water lines and sanitary sewers have greater potential for development in the short-term, and development at higher densities or intensities, than areas which are not served. For this reason, coordinating the land use plan, road system, and these utilities is a central issue for planning in Conneaut.

Chapter III – Goals

The goals are derived from needs identified in the background studies and through public discussions over the course of the plan making process. They give direction to this plan.

General

- Preserve and enhance the positive quality of Conneaut while “Building a Bright Future in the Sharpest Corner”.
- Build community-wide expectation of managed growth and economic development.
- Publicize the key elements of this Plan and encourage all residents, businesses, and other property owners to assist with implementation in the common interest of the community.
- Enhance the image and functions of the key location of the community: the I-90/SR-7 interchange, downtown, and the harbor area.

Population

- Make Conneaut attractive to diverse people and households of all ages.
- In the short-term (5-10 years), halt or significantly reduce the population loss.
- In the long-term (10-20 years), stabilize and then modestly increase the population.
- Plan for a long-term population of about 20-25,000 residents.

Land Use

- Amend the land use plan to promote an efficient, balanced, and appropriate land use pattern which supports community objectives.
- Plan an orderly sequencing of growth in targeted areas of the community in order to most efficiently invest public and private development funds.
- Promote a pattern of more intense development in the northern and central areas of the community and lesser intensities in the southern and western areas.
- Update development regulations (Zoning Code and Subdivision Regulations) to provide the City with the most current and effective methods of land use management.
- Amend the Zoning Map to promote implementation of the land use plan.
- Focus development in target areas of the City which have the greatest potential for job and tax base development and for new residential growth.
- Give priority for new development to those areas most easily served by existing sanitary sewers or reasonable extensions.

Infrastructure (Transportation, Water, Strom and Sanitary Sewer)

- Plan efficient patterns of infrastructure to ensure maximum benefit from the public investments.

- Plan targeted infrastructure extensions and improvements to support land use and economic development objectives.
- Promote extension of regional light rail and transit to and/or through Conneaut as a means to increase access to jobs in the region, to import workers to local jobs, and to stimulate residential and commercial redevelopment in the core of the community.

Local Economy

- Increase employment opportunities in Conneaut.
- Diversify employment opportunities in terms of required skill levels and economic sectors.
- Promote “employment-readiness” of the Conneaut labor force by providing education and training matched to the employment opportunities in Conneaut and within the “commuting zone”.
- Increase median income to match or exceed State median.
- Diversify the economic base to take advantage of growth trends in multiple sectors and to protect the local economy and tax base from over-dependence on specific economic sectors. Promote growth in the following economic sectors: Manufacturing, Retail, Services, Prison operations, Transportation, Tourism, and Agriculture.
- Enhance the Conneaut business environment to provide resources and incentives competitive in the regional and state markets.
- Promote the advantages of business location in Conneaut on a regional, state, and national level.
- Make the City and its properties as “development-ready” as possible.
- Promote quality development (good site design, landscaping, etc.) which contributes to the long term value of individual properties, to the value of the districts in which they are located, and to the value of the community as a whole.
- Increase and diversify the retail and services available to Conneaut residents.
- Encourage coordination of all agencies devoted to economic development in pursuit of these goals.

Environment

- Identify and protect the key environmental features of the community.
- Utilize environmental resources to provide a healthy community for residents.
- Utilize environmental resources to provide recreation for both residents and visitors/tourists.

Housing

- Promote variety in the types, densities, and prices of housing in order to be attractive to a wide market and to meet the needs of residents and prospective residents.
- Enhance the older neighborhoods of the City.
- Encourage preservation of historic housing.
- Promote renewal of older neighborhoods by encouraging infill and replacement with new types of housing, such as townhouses.

- Decrease city-wide housing vacancies to a level of no more than five percent (5%), excluding seasonal units.
- Encourage the development of new residential subdivisions to meet contemporary housing demands.

Community Facilities

- Promote community facilities which contribute to a high quality of life for all residents.
- Provide parks and recreational facilities in a planned system.
- Promote the location of community facilities in the core development areas of the City, especially downtown, in the interest of providing access for the most residents.
- Maintain the Compost site.

Chapter IV – Comprehensive Plan Update

The Conneaut Comprehensive Plan Update is comprised of four sections:

- General Development Policies
- Land Use Plan
- Transportation Element
- Infrastructure Element

General Development Policies

The overall purpose of this Plan is to prepare for and encourage new development. This plan builds upon ongoing and completed development efforts, sets realistic new targets for the future, and proposes a sequenced plan for action (*See Chapter V, Implementation.*)

High priority is given to job creation. Creating jobs will attract new residents, increase demand for housing (in both old and new neighborhoods), increase the markets to support local businesses, and generate new tax revenues to support public services and facilities.

The overall purpose of this Plan is to prepare for and encourage new development

The elements of this Plan are focused on the following:

- **Promote industrial development – and industrial job creation** – in the proposed East Industrial Corridor and in the Parrish Road area supported by improved access and utility extensions.
- **Promote the growth of service businesses – and jobs – in the Downtown and Gateway North areas.**
- **Promote new commercial development** in the interchange area while maintaining and upgrading existing commercial areas including downtown, harbor commercial, and east side and west side commercial districts on US 20.
- **Promote new residential development** in three areas with priority given to the Dorman Road-Middle Road area surrounding the new schools.
- **Promote home ownership through infill and redevelopment** in older residential areas of the community with new homes.
- **Promote conservation and new recreation facilities** in the Conneaut Creek floodplain, giving priority to the section between Parrish Road and the CSX Bridge. Promote conservation in the remainder of the floodplain and in the tributary areas.
- **Maintain no more than thirty percent (30%) of the housing stock as rental property.**

Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan is a guide for the long-term planning, zoning, and development activities of the City. It recommends priority location for development through the 20-year planning period

(2002-2022) as well as the land use pattern at build out (a time projected to be well beyond the 20-year planning period).

The Land Use Plan is generally consistent with existing land uses and long-term planned land uses, with several significant enhancements:

- The **east side industrial** area is expanding to encompass more of the proposed east side industrial access route.
- Clustering of related commercial uses by quadrant is encouraged in the **interchange area**.
- The **downtown commercial** area is focused onto the main commercial streets to promote a viable core and to protect surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- **Commercial areas in the east and west areas of US 20** are planned for more concentrated and viable development patterns.

The following sections describe in greater detail the plans for residential, commercial, industrial, open space and recreation areas. Several important areas are also identified as having potential for future alternate uses.

Residential Land Use Areas

A varied housing stock will be necessary to attract and meet the needs of a diverse and increasing population. Residents will be attracted to both new “suburban style” housing developments and to quality housing (both older homes and newer replacement homes) in the older neighborhoods.

New Residential Areas. While new residential development in any area should be welcomed, priority for new subdivisions should be in the following three neighborhoods due to their accessible locations, amenities, and proximity to major access routes:

- ***Gateway/Dorman Neighborhood.*** Proximity to the new schools, interchange, and access to the existing sanitary sewer in Dorman Road are advantages for development of new residential subdivisions in this area within the next 3-7 years.
- ***Daniels/Parrish Neighborhood.*** This area has advantages similar to the Gateway/Dorman Neighborhood except for lacking access to a sanitary sewer, and being somewhat less attractive for walking to the school sites. Planning for sanitary sewer services to this area should begin as soon as possible.
- ***Parrish/Lake Neighborhood.*** The planned improvements to Parrish Road will make this area more accessible and attractive for development. Sewers are already available, the area abuts an existing city park, and (as shown on the Land Use Plan) there is potential for a greenway connection to the lakefront recreation areas.

Existing Residential Areas. Existing residential areas have advantages of existing infrastructure (roads and utilities) already in place as well as proximity to schools, churches, and other amenities. Some market segments are showing renewed interest in the higher density, urban style of older neighborhoods. A current disadvantage of some of these neighborhoods is that some homes are in poor condition or lack features preferred by some segments of today's market. Recommended strategies for the existing residential areas include:

- ***Promote infill and replacement development*** on vacant or underdeveloped properties in the areas already served by utilities.
- ***Continued Code Enforcement.*** Continue to provide code-enforcement resources to require either repair or removal of deteriorated housing.
- ***Encourage construction of new housing types*** to meet the needs of diverse households and to provide alternatives in the older, denser plats. Townhouses and attached single-family homes are attractive, space-efficient formats suitable for replacement and infill on smaller, older lots.
- ***Continue rehabilitation assistance programs*** for low-moderate income homeowners. The city should continue to seek and administer housing rehabilitation grants in areas having potential for restoration as viable neighborhoods.
- ***Adopt redevelopment-friendly codes*** which permit reconstruction on existing small lots.
- ***Provide redevelopment incentives*** such as tax abatement for new or fully rehabilitated owner-occupied housing in selected target areas.
- ***Promote preservation of dwellings which have historic or architectural value.*** Document and protect the community's historic and architectural resources by encouraging preservation and promoting appropriate maintenance and rehabilitation of these structures.

Agricultural and Low Density Residential Areas. The area's most distant from the core of the community provide opportunities for retention and expansion of agricultural activities together with low density residential use. These areas are generally:

- South of Underridge Road
- West of the Parrish Road frontages, excepting the US 20 west corridor which is already served by sanitary sewers.

These areas are least practical to serve with sanitary sewers and are appropriate for uses which may be established with on-site sanitary waste disposal systems.

Some of these areas have advantages for specialized agriculture such as viniculture. Preserving low density areas may also encourage other agricultural uses such as specialty vegetables and livestock.

Commercial Land Use Areas

Well-planned commercial areas are essential to meet the retail and service needs of residents, visitors, and local businesses, to provide jobs, and to promote accessibility, viability, value, and good maintenance in the commercial areas. Commercial areas should be located, sized, regulated, and developed to meet the needs and attract the business of current and future markets. This Plan recommends the following land use strategies for maintaining and developing retail and office areas:

I-90 Interchange. The properties surrounding the I-90 interchange have great potential for development and great value for the property owners and the community due to their exposure and accessibility from I-90 and SR 7. The community and owners should protect and take advantage of the unique characteristics of the interchange through effective planning and development. Although, it has to be noted that some of the parcels do have wetland issues which will make them difficult to develop.

This plan recommends that the interchange area be designated for a mix of local and traveler commercial uses. It is recommended that related commercial uses be clustered in the quadrants as described below:

- ***Northeast Quadrant*** (north frontages of Gateway and area surrounding the existing motel). This area should be developed with businesses which serve interstate travelers including restaurants (both fast food and sit down types), overnight sleeping facilities, and fueling stations for passenger vehicles. The properties north of the Gateway frontage properties will require a new north-south access road to create new commercial frontages. This area has potential for offices and service uses.
- ***Northwest Quadrant.*** This area is most suited to meet local area retail and service needs with additional shopping center development compatible with (and perhaps replacing) the existing small commercial center. Office and service uses may also be appropriate in the northern and western areas of this quadrant.
- ***Southeast and Southwest Quadrants.*** This area is separated from the anticipated congestion, schools, and denser residential areas north of the interstate, yet has excellent access and good exposure. It is appropriate for truck-related uses such as a truck stop with lodging, food, fuel, and truck services. This intersection is planned as the point of connection for the local truck/industry routes on the east (Underridge-Furnace-Thompson) and west (Underridge-Parrish Road) sides of the City.

The south corners of the SR-7/Underridge intersection will be suitable for small areas of neighborhood commercial and services, convenience retail, and restaurants.

Downtown. The Downtown is the historic commercial core of the community. The following land use strategies are recommended to build upon the historic buildings, infrastructure, and locational strengths of Downtown.

1. Cluster related and compatible uses in the three major use areas of Downtown:

1. Main Street Traditional Corridor. The cluster of substantial historic commercial buildings – on the Main Street blocks from Buffalo Street to Harbor Street and on Broad Street from Main Street to State Street – is suitable for high-intensity/first floor “window-shopping retail” and financial services including:
 - Specialty retail and “leisure/tourist retail” such as florist, books, gift shops, photographic, electronic, baker, specialty/ethnic foods, art/craft, antiques, personal services, such as hair care.
 - Banks, ATM’s
 - Restaurants, bars, entertainment
 - Business services such as copying, printing, and mailing

The 2nd floor areas of Main Street are suitable for uses listed in the Liberty Street Corridor below. One or more buildings may also be suitable for residential apartments and a hotel.

2. Liberty Street Office/Service Corridor (and Main Street from Buffalo Street to Mill Street). These former residential areas are transitioning to non-retail business areas. They are most suitable for office and consumer/business services.
 - Medical, dental, emergency care
 - Insurance, legal, accounting, financial, other professional offices
 - Funeral homes
 - Bed and Breakfast Inns
3. Us 20 Highway Corridor. This corridor is suited to auto-oriented retail and service, requiring parking or drive-thru facilities, including such uses as:
 - Small grocery store, drug store, convenience store
 - Fuel stations
 - Auto parts
 - Hardware, tool rental
 - Fast food
 - Post office
 - Dry cleaner/laundry

- ***Maintain downtown as the center of important public and semi-public facilities.*** The presence of City Hall, Police Station, Post Office, Library, schools, churches, and other major community facilities is essential to maintaining the position of the downtown area as the core of the community. These uses support business in the downtown and draw customers. The City should encourage the retention of community facilities in downtown and consider downtown locations for any new facilities.
- ***Protect and enhance the small neighborhoods immediately surrounding the downtown.*** The quality and character of abutting neighborhoods affect the businesses in downtown. The City should encourage and promote rehabilitation and redevelopment of quality

housing in these neighborhoods. (See previous discussion regarding existing residential areas).

- ***Develop a mixed use concept for the residential areas abutting Downtown*** which retains a high density of dwellings and encourages diverse new housing development, but also allows compatible small business activity. A number of small businesses are already located in these neighborhoods. There is potential for encouraging more such businesses in a manner which is compatible with the area.
- ***Anticipate and promote the potential of light rail passenger service and “transit oriented development”***. Recent regional studies have evaluated the potential for extending passenger rail service along the Lake Erie shore from Cleveland to Erie – and through Conneaut. While currently priorities appear to be for the development of other routes, the City should promote this important travel opportunity. A transit station in downtown (perhaps in the area of the Broad Street/Norfolk Southern rail) could stimulate intensive commercial and residential development in the core of the community, as well as support increased tourism activity. A passenger rail connection could bring workers into the community as well as increase access for Conneaut residents to jobs in other parts of the region.

Harbor. The Harbor area has potential to serve and benefit from two markets: local neighborhood retail/service and the seasonal boating/fishing/tourism trade. The central axis of commercial development should be Park Avenue (with potential for some additional, related uses such as lodging and services on the abutting streets). Continued development consistent with the 1991 Conneaut Port Authority Master Plan for the port area should be encouraged.

- Continue development of boating and fishing facilities, maintaining and increasing public access to the lakeshore. This will benefit not only Conneaut residents, but also attract visitors.
- Continue development of boating and fishing facilities. These facilities also benefit and attract both Conneaut residents and visitors.
- Expand commercial uses in the Park Avenue area, including recreation, tourism, dining, and neighborhood commercial uses. Greater emphasis should be given to Park Avenue, creating an intentionally-designed corridor of uses. Non-related uses and gaps in the commercial façade line should be discouraged. Attention to streetscaping (lighting, benches, plantings, etc.) will add character to the area and strengthen the corridor.
- Consider permitting and encouraging additional bed and breakfast operation in the nearby residential neighborhoods. Well operated B&B’s are an important support resource for tourism as well as a significant source of seasonal income.

US 20 East. Numerous commercial structures and undeveloped and deteriorated properties are scattered along US 20 east of the Conneaut Creek Bridge. These structures have apparently suffered from loss of market position. Many are vacant and in poor condition. They appear to have

been viable many years ago when US 20 was a more significant regional highway. It also appears that the homes along this corridor are being rehabilitated.

A more appropriate commercial pattern for this area today is a concentration of neighborhood service commercial uses (small retail, restaurant, personal services) focused on a limited segment of US 20. A useful neighborhood center should be shaped in place of the existing formless, weak string. Transitioning to this pattern will be difficult and will take time as non-conforming uses slowly convert to conforming uses and the pattern adjusts.

Specific recommendations include:

- Focus retail commercial uses on the US 20 frontage from Old Main Road to a point just east of Middle Road.
- Encourage conversion of some of the formerly commercial areas to alternative uses such as offices and services.
- Permit and encourage displacement of the commercial structures with higher density housing.
- Plan the area now zoned for business on the north and east end of this district for industrial development.

US 20 West. Commercial structures and uses are also scattered along the US 20 frontages in the west end of the City. This pattern, as in the east end of US 20, appears to have developed when regional travel and market patterns were different. With the exception of the shopping center, there is no focus in this area and thus the businesses depend on diversion of limited pass-by-traffic and “destination trips”. The result is a very weak and overextended commercial strip.

It is recommended that commercial development be focused on two or three strong commercial locations. As on US 20 east, transition will be difficult and slow, but may be facilitated by the following strategies:

- Focus retail commercial uses in the Parrish Road and Amboy Road intersections. The planned future condition of Parrish Road as a major north-south corridor in particular, will make this a strong commercial location. Amboy Road will serve as a smaller, convenience retail/service area for this west end neighborhood.
- Encourage conversion of some of the former commercial areas to alternative uses such as offices and services. The hospital area between Parrish Road and Brown Avenue would be ideal for these types of uses with the possibility of small non-food shops.
- Permit and encourage displacement of commercial structures with higher density housing.

The areas from Parrish Road west to the city limits provides ample opportunity to allow development along US 20 for business uses, but care should be taken as to the placement of certain businesses that may possibly spill over into residential areas.

Industrial Land Use Areas

Industrial land use should be focused in two corridors identified in the Plan. These locations are intended for improvement with roadways and utilities appropriate for these uses and are reasonably located to minimize industrial impacts on the denser residential areas of the community.

East Industrial Corridor. The existing industrial zoning pattern and the City's industrial acquisitions and investments on the east side of the City are the basis for the planned East Industrial Corridor. This planned industrial area will link the northeast corner of the City, the prison facility, the US 20 industrial area, and new industrial areas on Thompson, Furnace, and Underridge Roads directly to the I-90 Interchange area. This industrial access route, which avoids the more complicated and disruptive routes through the core of the community, will increase the attractiveness of the industrial district, open inaccessible industrial properties for development, and expand the types of industrial properties available to the market.

It is recognized that the roadway and utility improvements will be costly. One rail crossing (the Bessemer & Lake Erie Railroad) and roughly 3.5 miles of new and improved roads will be required. Multiple funding sources (local and state) will be required to finance this corridor.

Parrish Road Industrial Corridor. Several important members of the City's industrial community are located in the properties abutting the railroads in the central and west-central areas. This Plan recommends that this area be strengthened and improved by providing improved access to I-90 and also several internal industrial roads.

Some industrial uses are scattered along the rail right-of-way on the east end of this Corridor and near the core of the community in a pattern, which is mixed into and conflicts with surrounding residential areas. These locations are often not ideal for industrial operations and expansion. It is recommended that over time, these areas be redeveloped for residential or residential-compatible uses and that industrial uses be encouraged only in the primary industrial areas described above.

A similar use conflict occurs in the Gore-Amboy Road area in the west end of the Corridor. In this instance, it is the residential uses which are out of place. This area should eventually be redeveloped for industrial activities. The extension of sanitary sewers into this area will be required to support development.

The Northeast Corner. The northeast corner of the City (which is also the northeast corner of the State of Ohio) is an extremely isolated area. The major isolating factors are its boundaries – Lake Erie on the north, the game land preserve in the State of Pennsylvania on the east, two railroads on the south, and the Dock Company facilities and Conneaut Creek on the west. Although the area was once accessible via public right-of-way, those roads were vacated nearly 30 years ago in anticipation of a failed attempt to develop a steel plant. At this time, the area remains disconnected from the community, utilized only in part by the dock operations and railroads.

This area is perceived as a tempting and frustrating latent economic development asset.

Closely related to and abutting this area is the area surrounding the mouth of Conneaut Creek, from the CSX rail bridge north to Lake Erie. This area is dominated by the dock operations – a long-time employer and business resident of the community. The dock operations and associated rail facilities encompass both sides of the Creek in this area.

The Plan indicates continued industrial (transportation) use for these areas. The longer view however, suggest that someday all or parts of these properties may be available for alternative land uses and developments which may have even greater economic benefits to the property owners and to the community. While it is difficult to point a direct course to such a future, the two alternatives below explores some of those possibilities.

Northeast Corner Alternative. Expanded Industrial Use. The availability of intermodal access suggest that this area may be valuable for industrial or warehousing operations requiring import and/or export of heavy bulk products, such as a power generating plant.

The primary drawback to the site is the lack of vehicular access. Providing access for employee's vehicles and other vehicles will require construction of one or more major improvements to span either the railroads or Conneaut Creek – or both. Selection and design of the most feasible access routes appear to be; (1) extension of Thompson Road north from US 20 over the rail facilities; and (2) extension of Lake Road east into the Conneaut Creek valley and crossing the Creek itself. Both alternatives will involve considerable expense and disruption of existing facilities and operations. Given sufficient value in the proposed use however, these or other alternatives may prove financially feasible.

Northeast Corner Alternative: Recreational Uses. All or parts of this area may have potential for recreation uses which could contribute to the tourist sector of the community's economic base. Future abandonment of the dock operations or reconfiguration (such as consolidation on the east side or reconfiguration into a new facility at the mouth of the Creek inside an expanded break wall area) could make major recreation development possible.

The west side of the Creek has great potential for boating and other recreational uses. Such a redevelopment could add value to residential areas on the hillsides and increase the market for the Harbor commercial area. Given access improvements, the east side could also become attractive for boating and other recreation and may also present opportunities for new high-value housing.

The lake frontage of this northeast corner also has potential for increasing public access to the lake. In this Plan, it has been designated for that purpose, even with continued industrial usage of the inland areas. Alternative ideas for this lakefront and the inland areas include a state park and lodge or an amusement park.

Open Space and Recreation Areas

The immense amount of private open space existing in Conneaut makes it difficult to imagine the community without it – and even more difficult to set its preservation as a priority. Conneaut has however, a pre-development open space preservation opportunity which many communities would envy. This Plan recommends preservation of critical open space and the reservation of areas for future recreation integrated with the land use development and growth concepts.

- ***Harbor Park Areas.*** The Conneaut community is home to one of the finest public access areas on Lake Erie. The Harbor recreation areas provide excellent facilities for boating, fishing, beach use, and general open space enjoyment. The improvements made by the Port Authority in recent years have increased these opportunities. The Harbor recreation facilities are well-located to benefit the core of the Conneaut community and are recommended for continued investment.
- ***Conneaut Creek Park.*** It is recommended that the City (and other governmental and non-profit partners) acquire the flood plain of Conneaut Creek from the Parrish Road Bridge to the CSX rail bridge for public recreation, a bike/walk route, fishing, and other preservation and public use activities. This linear creek corridor will become the core of the future parks and recreation system of the City. It will provide opportunities for linking walkways, bikeways and neighborhoods. The Creek Park – or at least a public bike/walkway – could also be extended to the Creek Road Bridge, providing improved access and linkage for the west end neighborhood.
- ***Conneaut Creek Land Trust.*** All communities and property owners downstream of any other community or property owner may be severely impacted by destructive upstream practice in Conneaut Creek. Upstream of the Parrish Road bridge, and in the major tributaries anywhere along the Creek, the City, other affected communities, and their governmental and non-profit partners should work to ensure protection and preservation of all of Conneaut Creek.

It should be recognize that most of this long creek corridor will continue to be privately owned. While acquisition for public use will be an appropriate and necessary approach in some limited segments, it is not necessary or feasible over the entire corridor. Education, technical resources, incentives, and other methods should be used to encourage appropriate use of this resource on a watershed-wide basis to promote protection and wise use of the Creek.

- ***Community Bikeway/Walkway Systems.*** With the proposed Conneaut Creek Park as a central spine, there is potential to create a community-wide system of bike and walk routes circling and interconnecting the developed areas of the community. The concepts shown on the Plan are intended to interconnect the schools, parks, and other major locations for alternative transportation, recreation, and healthful exercise opportunities throughout the most densely developed areas of the community.

- ***East Lakeshore/Turkey Creek Public Area and Preserve.*** The segment of the lake shore extending from the east side of Conneaut Creek to the state line has potential for public use and for environmental preservation and enjoyment – when access becomes available. The area also includes the outlet of Turkey Creek which drains a portion of the abutting Pennsylvania game lands. At this time, the area is privately owned and inaccessible. It is recommended that any future plan for development or use of this area include reservation of corridors on the shoreline and Turkey Creek for public access and use.

Transportation Element

This element recommends an improved transportation network which serves the needs of local residents and businesses in concert with the Land Use Plan. Particular emphasis is given to improving accessibility to the two industrial development corridors.

Roads

While the City enjoys a relatively well-interconnected system of roads which generally meets its needs, future development will require significant improvements and some new roads.

Develop new north-south routes. Two major north-south routes are recommended on the east and west sides of the City improving the connections from the I-90 interchange to US 20 and other areas.

- ***East side.*** A new route is recommended as the core of the proposed East Side Industrial Corridor. This route would expand the capacity of selected existing roads and construct extensions of Thompson Road to access the east side industrial area and, potentially, the northeast corner of the City. This system bypasses the major residential and commercial areas of the City and provides easy access for trucks, land, and employee commute traffic.

During the course of preparing the Plan, there was extensive discussions about the likely cost and disruption which the proposed east side industrial traffic route may incur. There was discussion about the potential for constructing a new I-90/Thompson Road interchange at the east border of the City. If physically and financially feasible, this interchange could provide more direct access to major development in the east half of the City and reduce impact on some areas. It is recognized that a significant economic development project may be necessary to create the benefits – and traffic – to justify this alternative.

Implement Access Management in the Interchange Area. The importance of the I-90 Interchange area and the potential for future congestion in the SR-7 intersections with Gateway Avenue and Underridge Road cannot be overemphasized. It is essential that the City plan and enforce an access management plan in this area to ensure that the key intersections and connecting roadways are maintained at an acceptable level of service.

Elements of access management in this area will include:

- Upgrading these intersections for the types and volumes of traffic anticipated, including heavy local traffic (including school traffic) in the Gateway intersection and heavy truck traffic in the Underridge intersection.
- Plan for the locations of street intersections and private driveways along with points of access on Gateway Avenue and Underridge Road. Points of conflict should be limited. Driveway offsets should be subject to City approval. Use of shared drives and marginal access drives should be required when necessary.
- To the extent feasible, segregate heavy truck traffic to the southerly (Underridge) intersection.

Other Proposed Roads. Several other new roads are recommended in support of this Plan. (*See locations indicated on Land Use Plan Maps.*)

- Gateway North. A road is proposed extending northward from Gateway Avenue East to Welton Road. This road is intended to provide access for the planned office/service development on the east side of SR-7. This road also provides an alternative access for the Dorman Road neighborhoods. Alignment and construction of the north connection into Welton Road will be complicated due to the topography and the necessity of coordination with the proposed greenway.
- Gateway West. The extension of Gateway west of Center Road to Parrish Road is proposed to provide frontage for new commercial development and a direct connection for local traffic to the improved Parrish Road corridor.
- Campbell Boulevard. This proposed road (located north of Chamberlain Blvd. and connecting to Parrish Road) is intended to provide new frontages for industrial development.
- Jackson Street West. While not anticipated in the near term, this road extension would provide new industrial frontages in the area between the rail lines if the rail yard is ever relocated or abandoned. This road may also provide improved access under the proposed railroad overpass to Gore Road.

Rail and Lake Shipping

Conneaut's history is built upon the transportation industry – notably rail and lake shipping. While the relative economic importance of these activities has declined, they still hold potential for the economic future of the community. While nonspecific improvement of rail and lake shipping facilities may provide economic benefits to the community through shipping, commuting, and tourism.

- Promote the intermodal shipping resources of the dock facilities. Recognizing that lake shipping, rail, and interstate highway come together in Conneaut, the City should seek businesses which can take advantage of this intermodal opportunity. The City should play a key role in coordinating the relationship between the industry and the transportation resources, including obtaining financial assistance for facilities connections and improvements.



- Promote rail access resources for industrial growth. The NW line and potentially the B&LE could provide rail siding access for industrial customers. A B&LE siding could be extended into the City-owned Thompson Road industrial area as well as into the Northeast Corner.
- Promote regional passenger rail. While long on the decline there is now renewed interest in rail transit for commuting and tourism. The presence of the rails in Conneaut and recent studies of possible transit routes increase the potential for regional rail transit in the foreseeable future. As noted previously, a rail station in the downtown has the potential for taking Conneaut residents to jobs in other locations, bringing workers to jobs in Conneaut, bringing business to downtown, attracting residents to downtown and the abutting neighborhoods, and increasing tourist traffic. The City should plan for and promote regional rail transit.

Walkways/Bikeways

The Plan encourages the construction of a city-wide system of walkways/bikeways to interconnect neighborhoods, major public facilities, major commercial areas, and recreation areas. The system can be constructed within the time of this Plan given attention by the local park authorities, support and encouragement by local walking and bicycling advocates, and cooperation from affected property owners.

Infrastructure Element

The purpose of the Infrastructure Element is to identify the plan for utility improvements deemed necessary to support the planned land uses.

Water Treatment and Distribution

The public water system had been extended throughout almost all parts of the City. Community growth will increase water demand. The gap between the present production capacity of the water treatment plant and current water demand however, indicates that water supply will not be a significant limitation to development for most of the planning period.

Sanitary Sewers and Treatment

The most critical utility improvements required for realizing the land use changes proposed during the period of this Plan are sanitary sewers. The timing of sewer extensions will impact the timing of key developments.

The four areas in which sanitary sewer extension are deemed most critical in the next decade are as follows:

- **Dorman Road Residential Area.** Due to the new schools and connections of Gateway Avenue to Dorman Road, residential growth is expected in this area. A 10" sanitary sewer line is already installed in Dorman Road and is expected to meet the needs of development in this area. Connections to this sewer will be made from both new frontage lots and new subdivisions connecting to Dorman Road.
- **Interchange Area.** The commercial, office, and service uses planned for this area will require extension of sanitary sewers. It should be noted that sewers have already been recently extended into the southeast quadrant. Preliminary examination indicates that extending service to the northwest commercial quadrant may require construction of a new trunk line north to the creek valley and thence north and east toward the treatment plant.
- **East Industrial Corridor.** Planning, financing, and construction of sanitary sewers into this industrial corridor should be coordinate with the roadway improvements. The industrial properties on US 20 already have sewer available in the right-of-way and access may be easily extended to some part of the proposed Thompson Extension south of US 20. The proposed industrial properties near Underridge and Dorman Roads may have access to the sanitary sewer extended into the southeast quadrant of the interchange. Providing sanitary sewer to the balance of the corridor will require a significant project.
- **Daniels/Parrish Residential Area.** The "second stage" new residential area will require sanitary sewers for full development at a density appropriate for the location. The waste volumes may requires a major trunk line project as described above for the Interchange Area.

Also, as noted in the Background section of this Plan, other major improvements to the sanitary waste collection and treatment system will be required. Increased service to the areas south of Conneaut Creek and north of I-90 will require increased capacity at the Woodworth Road pump station. Also, throughout the sanitary sewer system, efforts must continue to reduce the amount of surface and ground water entering the system. Reduction of these flows will preserve plant capacity for treatment of sanitary waste materials.

Historic Preservation

Conneaut is proud of the fact that it was an early landing point for Moses Cleveland as he traveled along Lake Erie shoreline with his crew of Western Reserve surveyors. He did not arrive at the site of his namesake municipality (located a few miles west) until ten days later.

Since that historic landing in 1796, many historic events have occurred in this community. Many attractive structures, both residential and commercial, have been constructed. A significant number remain standing, with many in good to excellent condition. The structures include a brand of architectural styles and forms which reflect the location, times, and economic and social conditions of the community's past.



The presence of these structures has been recorded in the National Register and Ohio Historic Inventory forms prepared by local preservation advocates. A few years ago, the City established by ordinance, a Downtown Preservation District, together with regulations for preservation and a Design Review Board (currently inactive) to assist in their administration. The Conneaut Area Historical Society is active educating and encouraging preservation of these resources.

The community's historic and architectural resources have great value in terms of historic education, as a source of historic information, and as an element of tourism promotion – and as such can benefit economic development.

This Plan recommends continued and increased efforts to preserve and utilize local historic and architectural resources. Historic sites and structures should be documented, marked, and revered. Reasonable regulations which encourage the protection of these resources should be established and enforced. To the extent possible, resources should be made available to property owners to assist in learning about the proper care of these structures so they continue to be available to the entire community.



Chapter V – Implementation

Until action is taken, this Plan is only a collection of good ideas. Over the coming years, the City must take action to benefit from the time and effort invested by City Council, the Planning Commission, the Citizens Advisory Committee, and the many other residents and business people who have been involved in preparing the Plan.

This Chapter describes and programs the actions needed to make this Plan a reality. These tasks do not all need to be done at one time and it is not practical to do so. The actions in this document will be subject to funding considerations as well as the will of the community to follow the suggestions in this chapter.

An idea that is developed and put into action is more important than an idea that exists only as an idea.
- Buddha

It should be recognized that this Implementation Program is a “best guess” program based on current thinking. Circumstances will change over time, better ideas will come along, resources and opportunities will be found and lost. Some projects will become more important and others less important. The City will continue to have changing resources and changing demands for services. With those changes, the Implementation Program should also be adjusted.

The authority, resources, and will to implement the activities resides with various organizations in the community – largely within City Hall, but also outside of City Hall. While certain activities can only be implemented by City Council, City Staff, and the Planning Commission, the Plan will be most successful if other important community organizations take part. Some recommended or suggested organizations and possible important implementation tasks are listed.

Specific implementation activities are listed and described in four groups – Planning and Regulations, Capital Improvements, and Economic Development Tasks – as outlined on the next page and as described in more detail in the subsequent pages.

OUTLINE OF IMPLEMENTATION TASKS

Planning and Regulations

- Adopt the Plan
- Clarify and Upgrade Planning Commission Role
- Update Zoning Code and Subdivision Regulations
- Prepare Interchange Area Access Management Plan
- Promote Historic and Architectural Preservation
- Practice Continuous Planning

Capital Improvements

- Transportation Improvements

- Gateway West
- Thompson/Northeast Industrial Access
- Utility Improvements
 - Water System Improvements
 - Sanitary Collection and Treatment Improvements
- Open Space and Recreation
 - Conneaut Creek Core Area
 - School-to-Creek Corridor
 - Conneaut Creek Preservation Areas
 - Lakefront Areas
 - Walkways/Bikeway System
 - Combined Park and Recreation Program
 - Street Tree Program

Economic Development Tasks

- Upgrade Economic Development Coordination and Management
- Increase Business Development Resources
- Increase Efforts to Retain and Expand Existing Businesses
- Recruit New Businesses
- Seek Business Development in Multiple Sectors

Planning and Regulations

Several important actions are recommended to ensure that City Council, the Planning Commission, and City Staff have the regulatory tools and methods needed to implement the Plan.

- **Adopt the Plan.** This Plan has been prepared and adopted by the Planning Commission and is recommended to City Council for adoption as the City's development policy. The intent of adoption is to give direction to future development of the community and to indicate the City's intent to take action as provided herein.

It should be recognized that plan adoption does not legally bind the Council or Commission to take all action stated in the Plan. The Plan is a guide which anticipates periodic amendment and alternative activities which are deemed necessary from time to time for its implementation.

Adoption of the Plan by City Council indicates to the Planning Commission and City Staff that Council concurs in the Plan objectives and that the Plan may be used as guidance in their work.

Action: *Planning Commission recommends adoption.*

City Council adopts Plan.

- **Clarify and Upgrade Planning Commission Role:** In conjunction with the plan adoption and code amendment activities, it is recommended that City Council, the Planning Commission, and the City Administration collaborate to clarify and upgrade the role of the Commission in assisting Council to administer its development policy. The Commission should be positioned as a resource for and extension of Council in promoting new, good quality development and redevelopment in Conneaut.

Action: *Council, Planning Commission, and City Staff meet to evaluate current practices and to identify effective changes or new roles for the Commission.*

- **Update Zoning Code and Subdivision Regulations.** The most essential tools for managing development are the Zoning Code (and map) and the Subdivision Regulations. Code amendments are very important after preparation of a community plan because the development standards and land use patterns proposed in the Plan are implemented, in significant part, through the administration and enforcement of updated codes.

Zoning Code Amendments. Specific code amendments which should be considered in support of this Plan include:

- New or amended districts which promote and allow for the land use pattern recommended in the plan.
- Provisions which encourage innovative developments such as residential conservation development subdivisions.
- Provisions which encourage farmland preservation and residential development compatible with rural areas of the community.
- Provisions which promote quality site development (site design, landscaping, buffering, on-site storm water retention, etc.).
- Provisions which allow for and encourage reconstruction of new dwellings on existing small city lots to maintain and encourage high density in these neighborhoods.

Aside from plan implementation purposes, even the best-written regulations require periodic updates and additions to remain current with federal and state law and legal precedents and to ensure that the community has available the best current zoning and development tools. Among the regulatory development of the past decade which should be considered for inclusion in Conneaut's codes are:

- Site plan review and updated site plan standards for commercial and industrial developments.
- Buffer requirements between sensitive residential areas and new commercial or industrial uses.
- Regulations for troublesome uses such as cellular towers and adult uses.
- Impact mitigation regulations which require developers to bear the cost of traffic impacts, storm water impacts, etc.

- Increased requirements for professional assistance for the Planning Commission in the review of complex development projects and expert reports regarding proposed zoning amendments.

Zoning Map Amendments. Zoning Map amendments are very important adjustments to the Zoning Code in support of the community Plan. Selected Zoning Map amendments may be undertaken at the same time as the code amendments discussed above or at some time thereafter. It is most likely that some map amendments will be timely and appropriate for immediate action and that others will be less urgent (and implemented months or years later). It should be emphasized that the Zoning Map does not need to immediately be amended to reflect all use changes shown in the Land Use Plan. Specific map amendments can be made as they are timely.

The Land Use Plan illustrates some significant areas in which Zoning Map amendments will be appropriate, including but not limited to:

- Interchange commercial areas
- Downtown area
- Other commercial areas
- Industrial areas

Subdivision Regulations. Similar to the Zoning Code, Subdivision Regulations become out of date over time and require updates. Updates are especially important with increased awareness of the environment impacts of development and changing construction technologies. Well-written regulations with efficient subdivision procedures can encourage development. As always, it is essential that the standards and procedures protect the community by ensuring quality construction of infrastructure. Some specific updates which may be considered include adoption of Engineering Standards, storm water management requirements, and consideration of development impact fees.

Action: *Planning Commission requests Council to engage professional zoning assistance to prepare updated regulations*

Zoning consultant assists Commission, City Staff, and Council to draft and adopt updated regulations

Commission recommends code amendments to Council for adoption

Council takes legislative action

- **Prepare Interchange Area Access Management Plan.** Increased development in the Interchange areas will be accompanied by increased traffic. Management of that traffic will minimize congestion and inconvenience and promote safety. As noted in the Plan, municipal control of intersections and points of access in the Interchange area will be crucial to ensure continued functioning and an acceptable level of service of the traffic facilities in this area.

It is recommended that the City prepare and adopt an Access Management Plan, for SR7/Gateway Avenue, SR 7/Underridge Road, and Gateway Avenue/Center Road

intersections. All commercially zoned frontages of Gateway, Underridge, and Center should also be included.

The Access Management Program will project traffic volumes, plan for public right-of-way improvements, plan for points of access from the frontage properties, plan for future public and private streets in the area, and establish policies for the design, review, and approval of these points of access and facilities.

The Access Management Program may initially be prepared as a brief policy statement and incrementally expanded over time as traffic volumes and the complexity of the traffic patterns in the area increase.

Action: *Planning Commission recommends access management planning to City Council and City Staff.*

Council and Staff seek professional traffic planning assistance to prepare plan, and confer with Planning Commission in plan preparation.

Access Management Plan is updated over time as required by traffic and developments in the area.

- **Promote Historic and Architectural Preservation.** The following actions are recommended to promote preservation of its historic and architectural resources.

Action: *Council appoints members to the Design Review Board.*

New Design Review Board conducts regular meetings and administers regulations as provided by ordinance.

Design Review Board reviews applicable ordinances with Planning Commission and considers any appropriate amendments for recommendation to City Council.

Design Review Board and Planning Commission recommend ways to:

- *Reactivate interest and implementation of the Downtown Historic District.*
 - *Encourage coordination with the Conneaut Area Historic Society to promote preservation and education about local history and architecture.*
 - *Provide resources to educate and encourage homeowners to undertake historically compatible exterior remodeling of their homes.*
- **Practice Continuous Planning.** It is recommended that the Planning Commission, City Staff, and City Council practice “continuous planning”, that is periodic review of this Plan, review of the progress made in implementing the Plan, consideration of changed conditions which may affect the Plan, and periodic additions to or amendments of the Plan. This practice will ensure

focus on the Plan as development decisions are made and help to keep the plan current with the needs of the community.

Actions: *Planning Commission discusses status of the Plan, progress, changed conditions, need for additional planning at 1st meeting of each year (and in additional meetings as appropriate).*

Commission may send a brief “Status of the Plan” report to Council.

Council confers with Commission as needed regarding status of the Plan, resources needed for updates, etc.

Capital Improvements

Many development projects depend on the availability of (or reasonable anticipation of) infrastructure such as roads and sanitary sewers. In some instances, development may be instigated by the pre-installation of improvements (such as in the Interchange area). In other cases, (such as residential subdivisions) the cost of improvements may be borne by the developer as a cost of preparing lots for sale. In all cases, the City should anticipate and plan for the efficient layout of infrastructure.

Transportation Improvements

- **Gateway West.** This commercial road will require financial participation by both the City and developers. Most of the cost should be financed by the benefiting property owners, although a certain portion will be future through traffic going to Parrish Road and oversizing may be City responsibility. City should work out centerline with property owners.
- **Thompson Road/Northeast Industrial Access.** The plan proposes improved access to the northeast area of the City to promote industrial development and to route industrial traffic away from downtown and residential areas. Project includes the following elements:
 - **Underridge Road Improvements.** The Plan proposes that Underridge Road become an industrial roadway for SR 7 to Furnace Road, thence north to a new intersection with Thompson Road Extension as described below. Improvements are essential given the current condition of the road. It should also be recognized that this road is used by large agricultural vehicles. Improvement of this road is also intended to increase the attractiveness of new industrial areas on the north side of Underridge.
 - **Thompson Road Extension.** This Plan proposes the extension of Thompson Road south from US 20, across the B&LE rail to a new intersection with Furnace Road.
 - **Access into the northeast quadrant.** There does not appear to be easy alternatives for re-establishing access into the northeast area. The two most appropriate, albeit expensive routes of access appear to be (1) extension of Thompson Road north across the rails and (2) extension of Lake Road east across (or through) the dock areas and Conneaut Creek.

Both alternatives are costly and may only be justified by significant economic development benefit. The Lake Road extension alternative is only feasible if and when the Dock facilities are no longer in operation or are significantly restructured.

- **Parrish Road.** Parrish Road will be the major north-south road in the western half of the City and will encourage residential, commercial, and industrial development in this corridor if the following improvements are made:
 - **Conneaut Creek Bridge.** Planning and funding search should begin as soon as possible to assess alternatives. This project will involve land acquisition and significant construction.
 - **Widen and realign.** Connection of Parrish from Lake Road to the interchange area will significantly increase traffic. Realignment and improvement from Lake Road to Daniels Avenue or Gateway Avenue West Extension should be anticipated.

Action: *Through adoption of this Plan, the Planning Commission recommends the road improvement identified herein. From time-to-time, the Commission may urge action on these roadways. Council may request further study or comment from the Commission as these projects become timely. Insofar as feasible, road layouts should reflect the concepts set forth in this Plan, reasonable alternatives to those concepts, or new concepts accepted by the Commission and Council.*

Coordination and negotiation of street plans for an area or subdivision may involve Planning Commission, Council, City Engineer, and the property owners.

City Council and Administration negotiate financing, authorize design and construction or developers may propose subdivision and self-finance. Assessments of benefitting properties may be appropriate.

Utility Improvements

- **Water System Improvements.** It appears that major water plant capacity expansions will not be necessary for many years, although continued maintenance and updates should be anticipated. Major improvements to the distribution system should be financed by the City based on future revenues. Extensions to serve new subdivisions should be installed by developers. City sponsorship or participation in financing may be appropriate for projects representing significant economic development benefits.
- **Sanitary Collection and Treatment Improvements.** As noted earlier in this Plan, several significant improvements will be necessary in the coming years to support the planned pattern of development in Conneaut.
 - **East Side Woodworth Road System.** The developers of new residential properties will be required to install sanitary sewer extensions within their projects. Together with growth in

the Interchange area, new waste from residential developments is likely to exceed the capacity of the Woodworth Road pump station at Conneaut Creek. The City should anticipate this need, plan for the necessary upgrades, and continue to monitor flows. It is essential that the capacity improvements be made before major economic development projects are held up due to lack of sewer capacity.

- Parrish/Center/Daniels. Planning for service to the future residential area west of SR 7 should begin now. As noted in the Plan, preliminary thinking is that a new trunk sewer will be needed to serve this area and by pass the Woodworth Road pump station. Development in this area will be limited until capacity is available.

Open Space and Recreation

- **Conneaut Creek Core Area.** The City (perhaps a coordinated effort of the parks boards and Planning Commission) should take action to plan for public access in the core recreation and public access area identified in the Plan, from Parrish Road to the CSX Bridge. Acquisition of fee simple and easements should begin as soon as possible.
- **The School-to-Creek Corridor.** The City should develop a preliminary plan and approach property owners about the walkway proposed from the new schools to Conneaut Creek. If possible, this project should proceed concurrently with the schools projects.
- **Conneaut Creek Preservation Areas.** Upstream of the core area, the City should encourage and promote activities which ensure the proper use and preservation of the Conneaut Creek watershed. Creation of a land trust would provide a non-profit, private partner to the City's interests.
- **Lake Front Areas.**
 - The City should continue to encourage and support coordination of Township Park and Port Authority projects for public use in this area.
 - The City should promote protection of the Turkey Creek and northeast lakeshore areas for future public use.
- **Walkways/Bikeway System.** As illustrated in the Plan, the City has great potential to develop an attractive and functional walk and bikeway system. While major elements of such a system have been identified in this Plan, closer examination and more detailed planning will be required to establish specific routes, costs, and local priorities.
- **Combined Park and Recreation Program.** In several meetings during the course of preparing this Plan, there was discussion about potential efficiencies to be gained by merging the organization which currently has responsibility and control for providing public recreation and open space. As the community grows, it is likely that a unified local recreation program and a municipal recreation staff will become an effective means for owning, operating, coordinating, planning for the future of, and developing all public recreation properties.

- **Street Tree Program.** Recognize the value of trees in the City’s environment. Promote continuous improvement of the City’s urban forest through new plantings and replacement plantings of street trees and professional maintenance. Discourage the removal of healthy trees. Continue to pursue annual Tree USA designation.

Action: *Through adoption of this Plan, the Planning Commission recommends the general pattern of recreation and open space facilities identified herein. From time-to-time, the Commission may urge action on these facilities. Council may request further study or comment from the Commission before making specific recreation acquisitions or investments. The Commission may determine to take a position of advocacy in promoting and coordinating these facilities.*

Economic Development Tasks

Among the most important goals of this Plan are those directed toward improvement of the local economy, including expanding local job opportunities, increasing diversity of employment and business types, increasing incomes, and strengthening the tax base.

The Land Use Plan and the Transportation and Infrastructure Elements have been designed to provide appropriate locations for businesses, supported by the necessary roads and utilities. Beyond planning the locations however, coordinated efforts are necessary to encourage the business investments which will make economic growth a reality.

City officials and other local leaders have been aggressively promoting economic development in recent years. The following activities are recommended to support, continue, and expand these efforts to realize the community’s economic goals.

It is recommended that the City expand its economic development program through increased coordination and management, increased focus on retention and expansion of existing businesses, increased efforts in business recruitment, and increased business development resources.

- **Upgrade Economic Development Coordination and Management**
 - Personnel. Consider hiring a full or part-time economic development professional to assist the City Manager with economic development activities including preparing and maintaining the data base, marketing, communication with local businesses, communication with property owners, grantsmanship, deal-making, and coordination with other economic development organizations. Identify this position as the central contact for economic development projects.
 - Increase coordination and participation in economic development activities among the “local business team” including the City’s economic development officials, the Chamber of Commerce, the Port Authority, the Conneaut Area Historical Society, and other local organizations.
- **Increased Business Development Resources**

- **Information.** Sound, comprehensive information is essential to businesses seeking new locations. The City should develop a complete data base regarding available sites and buildings, owners, site conditions, current asking prices, and other information.
- **Incentives.** The City should continue to look at and develop new economic incentives to be competitive with bordering communities.
- **Workforce Development.** The City should work with State, County, and local school systems to provide training programs that can assist businesses and industry with meeting their work force needs.
- **Business Skills Training.** The City should coordinate with the Conneaut Chamber of Commerce to provide business skills training resources for persons interested in starting or maintaining their businesses in Conneaut. Many potential entrepreneurs have specialized skills which are the basis for their business but lack expertise in such areas as accounting, marketing, and personnel management. Providing training in these areas can promote the development and continuation of viable local businesses.
- **Development-Ready Sites and Buildings.** The City should coordinate and strategize with the owners of properties in the key industrial and commercial development areas shown in this Plan to encourage site availability and marketing for development. For example: Phase I Environmental Information should be prepared for all sites; data sheets should be available for key sites; tentative utility extension agreements should be negotiated. The City should also prepare its plan for development of its US 20 East Industrial properties so that a vision of the platting and improvements can be shared with business prospects.
- **Business Incubator(s).** The City should consider developing one or more business incubator facilities as a resource for startup businesses which may later expand to other private sites and buildings. Incubators may provide space, support services (such as secretarial, copying, etc.) and business training. A renovated downtown building may be an ideal site for startup service businesses. A new multi-tenant industrial building in the East Industrial Corridor may be ideal for industrial startups.
- **Increase Efforts to Retain and Expand Existing Businesses**
 - **Database.** Develop a database about existing businesses, their products, capabilities, markets, ownership, employees, and facilities. Periodically maintain and update this database.
 - **Maintain Contact.** Assign responsibility to the economic development officer to periodically contact (personally visit) the owners of local businesses to discuss

business needs, planned expansions, needs for employees and training. Seek the ideas and comments of business owners regarding the City's economic development program and potential business recruitment targets. Issue a periodic newsletter to all businesses regarding community business news, economic development activities and resources. Sponsor an annual "business mixer" to encourage local business owners to meet.

- **Provide Resources for Retention and Expansion.** Develop a clear program of resources available to assist and encourage local businesses to expand their operations within the City. Most of all of the resources available for attracting new businesses to the City should be available for expansion of existing businesses.
- **Recruit New Businesses**
 - **Upgrade Marketing and Promotion Package.** The City should have a comprehensive, professionally-designed, and ready-to-ship data package which is immediately sent to all businesses having interest in a location in the City. The packet should include the community profile, information about available sites, information about available incentives, and economic development officer contact information. The packet could also include incentives to visit the community, including certificates for free lodging and meals. All packages sent out should be followed up by a timely personal phone call or visit by the economic development officer. (The Chamber of Commerce has an information packet. Coordination between the Chamber and City may produce a very complete package and timely, effective response to business queries.)
- **Promote Business Development in Multiple Sectors**

In the course of preparing this Plan, it has been recognized that Conneaut has opportunities for business development in several economic sectors. The efforts recommended above for retaining/expanding existing businesses and for recruiting new businesses should take these sector opportunities into account.

- **Industry.** The recent acquisition (by the City) and improvement (sewer extensions) of industrial properties on the east side of the community places the City in a strong position to attract industrial growth and to retain local firms seeking new space. A plan should be developed for a bona fide quality industrial park extending from US 20.
- **Transportation.** The highway, rail, and port facilities of the community may be attractive for selected types of industry, warehousing, distribution, and other uses. In particular, the "local rail" facility – the B&LE – could provide the kind of specialized service needed by new industries seeking bulk or heavy transport from plant to port or connection to other rail lines. The potential for this type or service should be explored with the owners of the B&LE and port facility.

- **Commercial.** Commercial growth in nearby interstate interchanges suggest that similar activity can be attracted to Conneaut's interchange. Recent extension of sanitary sewers makes the available properties more attractive.
- **Tourism.** The community's numerous tourism resources – boating, fishing, hunting, the lake shore, historic sites, covered bridges, special events – already attract a significant number of tourists. Discussions during the preparation of this plan indicated the potential for greater coordination including joint marketing, local website (with links), and other efforts which can increase tourist awareness of Conneaut and increased economic benefits to the community. Additional tourism benefits can be gained from future expansion of marina facilities and new motel facilities.
- **Agriculture.** The diverse and active agriculture community, mostly located in the southern third of the City, is a small but important element of the local economy. Wine grape growing on the favorable slopes in the southwest area is increasing. Livestock and field crops are also scattered through this area. Production of additional high-value farm product, such as specialty vegetables, could be encouraged.
- **Encourage Rehabilitation of Existing Buildings – What the future can be.**

